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NSC BRIEFING

12 August 1954

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PERFORMANCE OF SOVIET TYPE 37

1. [ ] estimate of the new Soviet [ ] heavy bomber's probable performance, as it will be in 1957, now available. [ ]



Take off weight

Bomb load

Combat radius

Combat range

Target altitude

Maximum targets per hour

Optimum Mission

345,000 lbs.

10,000 lbs.

2,600 nm.

5,100 nm.

43,700 ft.

487 kts.

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This performance estimate (with 10,000 lb. bomb load, i.e. multi-megaton weapon)\* indicates that, in absence forward staging (on Chukotsk) and range extension (in-flight refueling or one-way missions), striking power of Type 37 is still generally oriented toward Europe, Asia, and peripheral areas. Thus, full measure of Type 37's threat to US depends upon:

- A. Soviet development of in-flight refueling (capability not yet demonstrated and requiring 18-24 months to develop).
- B. Soviet decision in 1957 to expend all 50 Type 37's then estimated to be operational on missions where only half might be expected to reach targets.

\* For other bomb-weight computations  
Background - Bomb Load Variations

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III. New performance estimate, iteration, 1957-1958 picture unchanged. Conventional TU-4 would still figure prominently.

medium jet - Type 39 - would be powerful element of strength against Eurasian and peripheral targets. Type 37 would just be reaching significant quantities.

- A. In view Soviet nuclear capabilities, picture is serious, formidable.
- B. But picture not particularly alarming as regards continental US.
- C. With subsequent combination of Type 27 series production, forward staging bases in operational condition, and development of effective in-flight refueling, however, Soviet air threat to US increases sharply. becomes very grave by 1958-59.